



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	OOE	Office of Education	Effective Date:
Volume:	I	Office of Education	
Chapter:	A	Office of Education	10-29-01
Subchapter:	1	Office of Education	
Issuance:	42	Intervention and Referral Services	Revised:

SUBJECT: Intervention and Referral Services to Students in the General Education Program

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 29, 2001

A. **OBJECTIVE**

To implement a systematic approach in Department of Children and Families (DCF) education programs which shall ensure that interventions are provided to students in the general education program to alleviate educational problems.

B. **STANDARD**

1. The interventions to students in the general education program to alleviate educational problems shall be provided pursuant to NJAC 6:A:16-7.

C. **PROCEDURES**

1. The Education Supervisor (ES) or designee at each DCF education program serving nondisabled students shall establish and maintain an Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) team to provide a mechanism for the resolution of the learning, behavior and/or health problems of students at risk of school failure through a structured, collaborative team approach. An I&RS team shall afford staff and parents the opportunity to seek assistance for educational problems in a safe and collegial manner.
 - a. The program-level I&RS team shall plan, organize and implement appropriate intervention and referral services for students who are experiencing difficulties in their classes and who have not been determined to be in need of special education programs and services.

- b. A DCF education program may also utilize the systematic planning, decision-making and problem-solving processes of the I&RS team, in coordination with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, to address staff and parental concerns and improve educational practices, programs and services for students with disabilities.
2. Technical assistance regarding the development and implementation of an I&RS team, including information about best practices for team collaboration, program planning elements, the I&RS team process and procedures, and sample forms, shall be provided by the DCF Office of Education upon request and through professional development activities.
3. DCF education programs may choose their own names to identify their I&RS programs.
4. The I&RS teams may meet on a regular basis or on an as needed basis.
5. Information about the I&RS team and procedures at each DCF education program shall be distributed at least annually to school staff, parents, and students, as appropriate, in order to promote awareness of the I&RS team and the procedures for connecting with the team.
6. The student data collected and the action plans developed during the I&RS process shall be considered confidential.
 - a. The I&RS teams shall utilize appropriate forms and procedures for the release and transfer of student information in accordance with NJAC 6:3-6 and OOE Policy #4, Pupil Records.
 - b. Alcohol and drug abuse patient records and information provided by a student while participating in a school-based counseling program which indicates that the student's parent or other person residing in the student's household is dependent upon or illegally using substances shall be kept confidential and may only be dis-closed under the circumstances described in NJSA 18A:40a-7.1.
7. As feasible, the I&RS team at each program shall attempt to actively involve parents or guardians in the development and implementation of intervention and referral services action plans.
 - a. When contacting parents, the name(s) of person(s) involved in the discussion, the time and date of the contact and a concise description of the outcome of the conversation shall be recorded.
 - b. If parents choose not to participate or cooperate with the I&RS team, the team shall proceed to help the requesting staff member and continue with the development and implementation of remedial plans for the identified academic, behavior or health concerns.
8. The composition of the I&RS team may be as fixed or flexible as necessary .
 - a. The recommended participants of the core group are as follows:
 - 1) Staff member who requests assistance for an educational problem;

- 2) Education supervisor or designee;
 - 3) Teacher; and
 - 4) Student Support Staff such as school psychologist, learning disabilities teacher/consultant, school social worker, school nurse, guidance counselor, etc.
 - b. In addition to the core group, the team should invite all appropriate school, home and community resources to participate in the I&RS data collection, problem solving, and action plan phases of the process, as necessary, to fully resolve the presenting problems of each individual case.
9. In a collaborative process, each of the team members shall be equally empowered. The following represents possible roles and responsibilities to be performed by members of an I&RS team. It is recommended that the roles rotate on a pre-determined basis.
- a. The **Team Leader** logs in requests for assistance, determines appropriateness of cases for review by the team, prioritizes cases, assigns case coordinators, schedules meetings, convenes meetings, prepares meeting agendas, serves as facilitator for the steps of problem-solving and the development of I&RS action plans or assigns role of facilitator, and clarifies and enforces building-level operating procedures and rules.
 - b. The **record keeper** is responsible for registering and maintaining accurate, written accounts of all meetings, holding a supply of forms, keeping a current calendar for the team, and assisting with the development and dissemination of correspondence.
 - c. The **timekeeper** is responsible for making sure that the team adheres to all time limits and for assisting the facilitator in keeping members on task during meetings.
 - d. The **case coordinator** is the primary contact with the staff member requesting assistance, leading the staff member through the process, providing support to help them feel at ease and offering technical assistance in implementing the I&RS action plan for the identified educational problem. The case coordinator also distributes and collects all data collection forms, compiles all of the behaviorally-specific data on the problem, analyzes trends and behaviors, presents the compiled data and perceived trends at the scheduled meeting and oversees implementation of each component of the I&RS action plan for the identified problem(s).
10. The following steps of the I&RS process shall begin when a staff member or parent concludes that he or she needs assistance with a learning, behavior or health problem.
- a. The **Request for Assistance** shall elicit the reasons for the request, observed behaviors, and prior interventions.
 - b. A member of the team shall oversee the **collection of data** from the person requesting assistance and other staff and community members, as appropriate.

- c. A team representative shall **notify parents or guardians** about the situation.
 - d. The prescheduled **problem-solving** meeting shall be convened.
11. The problem-solving model used by the I&RS team shall incorporate the following basic steps which shall include written documentation of the implementation and effectiveness of the interventions:
- a. **Describe the problem(s)** through the presentation of a summary of all the gathered data and information;
 - b. **Select and state the priority problem(s)** in order to provide focus for problem-solving and to monitor success;
 - c. **Develop a behavioral objective** which is a short-term, achievable, observable and measurable description of the targeted behavioral outcome;
 - d. **Review prior interventions** to consider the effects of past efforts and the reasons for successes and failures;
 - e. **Brainstorm solutions**;
 - f. **Analyze/evaluate brainstormed solutions**;
 - g. **Mutually agree upon a solution**;
 - h. **Develop the intervention and referral services action plan for implementation and follow-up**;
 - i. **Implement the action plan**;
 - j. **Provide support to the implementers** ensuring that they have the necessary and sufficient knowledge and skills, access to applicable resources and support by the I&RS team and school administrator(s) to achieve the objective;
 - k. **Convene follow-up meeting** for presentation and review of all relevant records and documentation of progress to determine the degree of successful implementation of the action plan and to make a decision whether to continue, modify or terminate the process based on achievement of objectives.
12. At least annually, the I&RS team shall review the disposition of their I&RS plans and team proceedings to consider trends, concerns and problems identified through the I&RS process in order to assist with the assessment of school-wide needs.

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